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STATE DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/NCE - WSILKWORTH

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [RO](#)
SUBJECT: ROMANIA: BASESCU DISPUTES SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE
U.S. UNILATERAL ACTION; SENATE MOVES TO RATIFY DEFENSE
COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Classified By: CDA Mark Taplin for Reasons
1.4 (a), (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) During a nationally televised interview on April 16, President Traian Basescu stated that the U.S. would not be able to launch an attack from Romanian territory without prior GOR approval. He characterized as "exaggerated" press reports that the U.S. could attack a third country from Romanian territory without GOR approval, pursuant to the U.S.-Romanian Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), currently awaiting parliamentary ratification. Basescu stressed during the interview that Romania will have "command" of the Romanian military facilities used by American troops, which "are on Romanian territory." Responding to a question from the interviewer about whether he would agree to the "placement of nuclear arms on Romanian territory," Basescu rejoined that he categorically "excluded" this possibility. Basescu also underscored in response to a question that the presence of U.S. troops in Romania near the Black Sea coast would not harm Romania-Russia bilateral relations. He noted that he was "the first to inform" Russian President Putin in February 2005 that Romania would host the facilities, which he said would have been "problematic" if they were NATO bases. He added in the interview that Romania is trying to protect its interests in the Black Sea region without harming those of Russia and Turkey. The questions regarding the military facilities came toward the end of a lengthy and wide-ranging discussion between Basescu and one of Romania's most prominent journalists, Bogdan Chireac.

¶2. (C) Separately, Senate Defense Committee Chairman George Cristian Maior (PROTECT) told PolMilOff April 11 that he and his colleagues in the former ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) "don't see any problem" with ratification of the DCA and "we are trying to do this before (Orthodox) Easter", which is April 23. Maior stated that the Defense Committee would conduct hearings jointly with the Foreign Affairs Committee, although the Defense Committee "has the lead." According to Maior, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee President Geoana (ex-FM, PSD President) would like to have (Foreign Minister) Ungureanu testify, but Ungureanu had been out of the country. Maior underscored that he anticipated few problems with ratification, following joint hearings, debate and vote.

¶3. (C) Comment. Maior's prediction of parliamentary ratification by the end of this week may be optimistic, given the normally relaxed pace of public life in the week preceding Orthodox Easter. Although our usual interlocutors confidently predict ratification of the DCA, given the

agreement's broad, bipartisan support, this does not rule out pointed questions directed at Ungureanu during the joint Senate Defense/Foreign Affairs Committee hearing. A lively debate on the floor of parliament is also a possibility. Some MPs may assert that Romania did not negotiate terms as favorable as those reportedly under discussion between the U.S. and Bulgaria, as has been suggested by some local media outlets. In addition, the case of the former Embassy Marine Guard Detachment Commander, whose 2004 automobile accident resulted in the death of a popular Romanian musician, will likely be another point of reference in any parliamentary discussion. End Comment.

¶4. (U) AmEmbassy Bucharest's reporting telegrams are available on the Bucharest SIPRNet website:
www.state.sgov.gov/eur/Bucharest
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